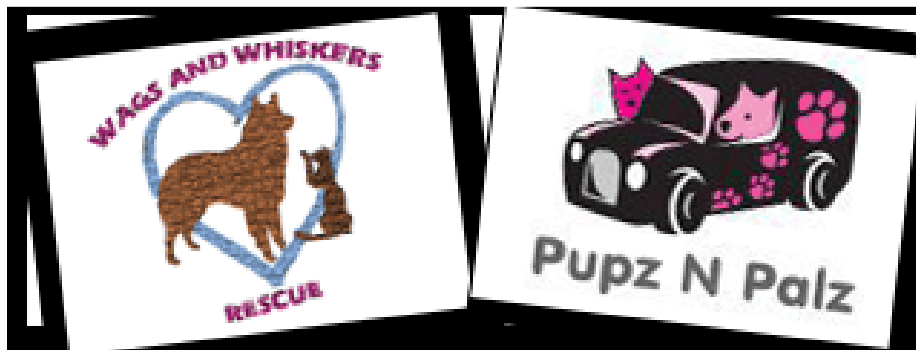


Adoption Handbook



Congratulations on your new addition! You have made a difference in the world by choosing to adopt and we greatly appreciate your commitment.

We hope you find the following information helpful in helping your new pet transition to your home and your life. While we can only cover the basics and offer general advice, please remember we are here for you if you are struggling with anything or just need a little more help. Because we are frequently in and out, email is often the best option. If you leave a message please be sure to leave your phone number for the quickest response.

Please remember your new dog is coming to you with some experience. Some transitions will be easier than others, but all will take dedication. It's not unusual for us to guess a dog's history based on what we see in the present, and then try to reshape behaviors and responses. When working with our dogs we use all positive reinforcement training and proper socialization techniques. We encourage you to continue all training in a positive manner to establish the best relationship.

Your first few days may be your most challenging, please be patient. Your new best friend really doesn't know what you expect and it is now your job to help your dog understand your expectations.

The Basics

1 - Always be consistent. Your dog will not understand it is only okay to do something when one person is home and not when another is there. Everyone in your household needs to be on the same page to help your dog understand the same rules. Questions you may want to address:

Is your dog allowed on the furniture? The bed?

Is your dog crated, gated, or left loose when home alone?

Is your dog ever fed by someone eating, while they are eating?

Is your dog allowed in all areas of the home?

There may be other questions that arise and there is no right or wrong. It's important your dog adapts to your lifestyle and your expectations. It's equally important the expectations are clear and everyone agrees and practices them.

2. When correcting an unwanted behavior, try to follow up immediately with an acceptable alternative. For instance, if you see your dog beginning to chew on a shoe, a quick "No" or "Leave It" will get your dog's attention, but then what? If you have a chew stick ready to offer as an alternative you are now teaching appropriate behavior and your dog does not need to figure it out by trial and error.

3. It is pointless to punish your dog after the fact. If you have left your dog loose and you get home and find something has happened (inappropriate chewing, potty accident, etc) please understand it happened and your dog has moved on. If you come home hours later and punish something, your dog will begin to associate you coming home to punishment. This is your opportunity to learn! Try gating or crating!

4. "Come" should always be followed with praise and reward. Please do not call your dog to punish him/her for something. Recall is one of the most important things you can have with your dog. No matter what the situation you want your dog to "want" to come to you, not wonder if it will be better to ignore you or run away.

5. PLEASE remember no matter how much you love your new family member they are still a dog! Leash laws not only protect people, but protect your dog...from running after a squirrel, wandering off and getting lost, darting into a busy road. Please keep your dog safe at all times, on the other end of your leash, when not in a securely fenced area.

Supply List:

Water Bowl - Fresh water should always be available.

Food Bowl - We recommend feeding your dog twice a day on schedule rather than free feeding.

Dog food - Your dog has been eating Natural Balance Lamb while in our care. If you wish to switch the food please do so gradually.

Collar with identification tags

Leash

Crate or gates

Bed

Toys - stuffed toys, treat toys, squeaky toys, interactive toys, etc. (a variety is best)

Chews - we do not recommend rawhide

Dog Treats - small, soft treats will work best for training.

OK, we're home!

When you first arrive home with your new dog it may be a bit overwhelming - new people, new spaces, new smells and sounds! It's best not to just open the door and see what happens. Let your dog go potty before going in the house if possible. It's best if you have a space set up for your new dog that will be their "place". A gated room is a great start. Have their crate, water bowl and few toys in the area and allow them a little time to adjust. This will become an area your dog feels safe and welcome.

When you bring your new dog into the rest of the home do so on leash or under close supervision to prevent any potty mistakes for at least the first week at minimum. Always try to take your dog outside to go potty first as this will help them learn where it is okay to do their business. Be sure to let them know going outside is a good thing by praising when they do it. Feeding your dog on a schedule will also aid in housebreaking, rather than free feeding. If you are controlling what time food goes in, it is easier to learn what time it needs to come out. During the housebreaking period, it is critical your dog is either confined or supervised in the house to prevent accidents. Water should be available to your dog at all times.

If your dog makes an "oops" in the house, clean the spot with an appropriate cleaner to remove any trace of the scent. If you catch them, you can say something like "No", or "uh-uh", then immediately take them out and wait for them to finish. If you find it after the fact, just clean it up and move on. Now it's your turn to figure out how you missed it and how you can prevent it.

Work on crate training positively. The crate should be a good place to go, not a punishment. Use chews and treats if needed to encourage your dog to go in the crate. You can gradually extend the crating time, but it's best to start with short periods of time, even a few minutes. If your dog whines or barks to come out, try your best to wait him out and release him/her only when there is "quiet". You certainly don't want to teach your dog they can whine or bark and get out of the crate as they desire. Practice this throughout the day the first few days your dog is home.

Keep company to a minimum for the few days. Set your dog up to build a relationship with you and your family. You should be watching everything your new dog is doing right now to help shape acceptable behavior. It can be more challenging if company begins by breaking the rules. The cute puppy jumping on them won't be so cute when the paws are muddy or he is 70 pounds. Your dog is in a completely new and foreign environment so it is a good time to let him/her relax and find out what is "here" and who you are.

Be sure your home has been dog-proofed. Dogs, especially puppies, may chew on a variety of items including electrical cords, shoes, paper, etc. Be sure poisons are safely out of harms way (including cleaning products and toxic plants). It will be much easier to focus on positive behavior by limiting the chance of negative behavior (chewing on inappropriate items).

Work and play should be part of everyday life. A tired dog is a well behaved dog. Playtime should be interactive but not aggressive or challenging in nature. Tug of war, wrestling, etc. can be harmful to learning appropriate play behavior. Walks, fetch, etc. allow for positive interaction with your dog and should be a part of life on a regular basis. "Work" involves training and expectations. Our dogs should want to please us and training is a great way of providing mental and physical stimulation. There are an unlimited number of activities available to experience with your dog: obedience, rally, agility, flyball, Frisbee, etc. Participation in activities and classes like these will also help build a stronger relationship you have with your dog.

Keep your dog social. It is important to expose your new dog to a variety of situations and people (please hold off on puppies until they are fully vaccinated). Most pet stores allow dogs as do many outdoor venues. While working on social skills, try not to let strangers "dive" at your dog. Depending on your dog and their reaction you may decide whether or not people can "pet" your dog. It is okay to politely say no (he is working, he is training, sorry, not right now, etc). Your responsibility is to your dog - to keep him/her safe and make socialization a positive experience. The goal is not to overwhelm your dog which can happen with numerous people approaching. It is important your dog is confident and feels safe in social situations.

We wish you a long and happy relationship with your new dog, and remember, we are here if you need us.

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Trina: 209-225-4539

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Our goal is to have your dog be a lifelong and valuable family member.

We also LOVE updates - stories and pics, so please let us know how your are doing.

Our website has a variety of articles containing useful information and insights available for download. Please feel free to reference any or all of them. If you have, or had, an issue and there is no additional information available, let us know and we will try to add it to the info page.

Recommended Reads:

I'll be home soon

Way to Go

101 Dog Tricks

Play together, Stay together

The Other End of the Leash